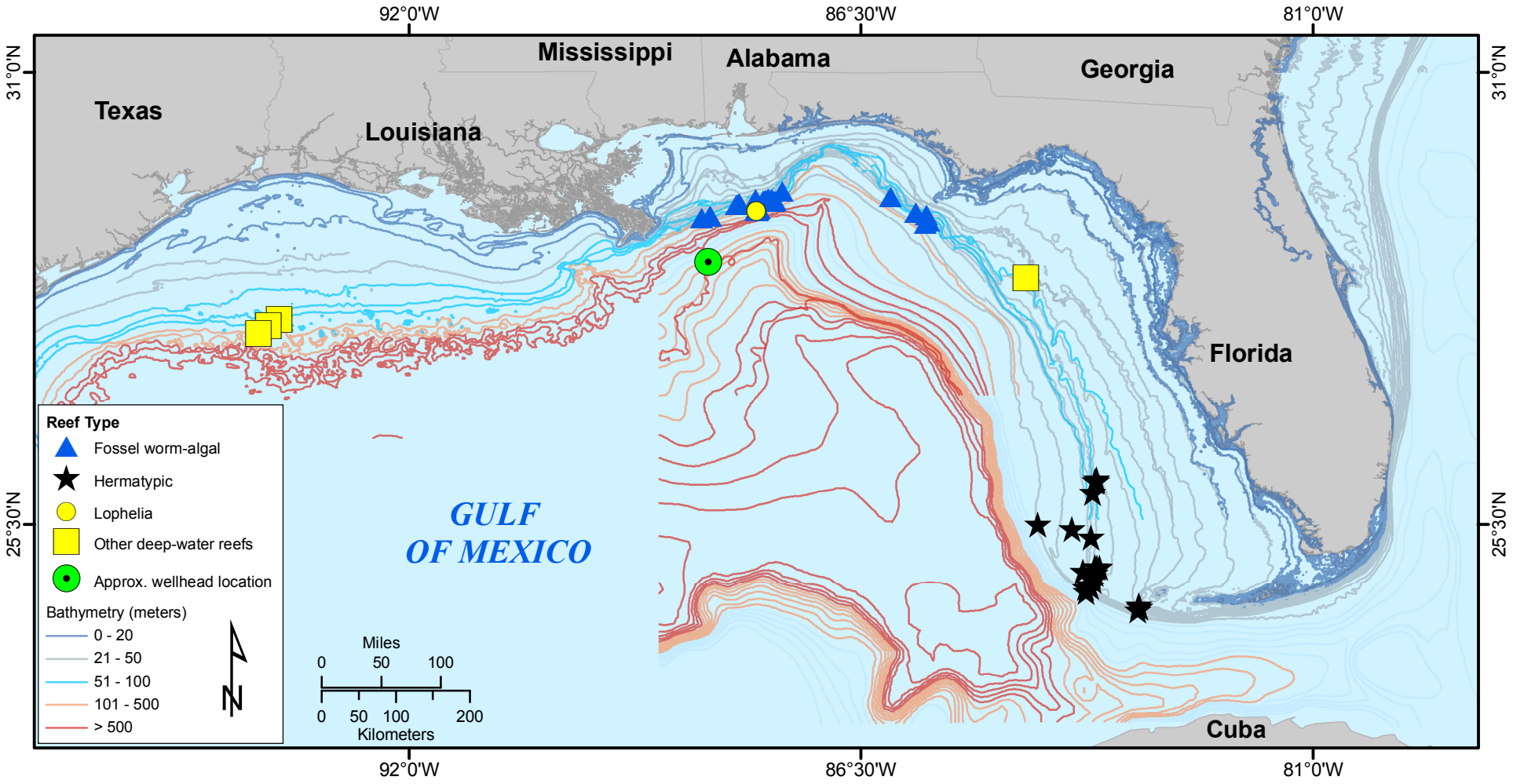
USGS Deep Coral Ecosystem Studies - Northeast and Southeast Gulf of Mexico and West Florida Shelf edge



The map depicts locations of shelf-edge (60-120 m deep) fossil worm-algal reefs (triangles) relative to the location of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil wellhead. These high-relief reefs support large and diverse populations of soft corals and fishes, including many economically important fishery species (snappers, groupers, porgies, amberjacks). In partnership with many collaborating agencies and universities, USGS conducted MMS and NOAA sponsored research on shelf-edge deep reef ecosystems during the 'Pinnacles' program (1997-2000) and the 'NEGOM' program (2001-2003), including high-resolution multibeam topographic mapping of 4,500 sq. km. of shelf-edge habitat. USGS extended deep-coral studies to Lophelia reefs (350-500 m deep) with the 'Lophelia I' program (2003-2005), followed by the 'Discovre' program (2007-2010). This map also depicts locations of Florida Middle Grounds and Flower Gardens (squares) and shelf-edge hermatypic lettuce-coral reefs (stars) relative to the location of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil wellhead. These are the deepest known hermatypic coral reefs in the Gulf of Mexico.
For further information: http://fl.biology.usgs.gov/coastaleco/index.html

This map is preliminary, for informational purposes only.

Data sources:
1. USGS 2. NOAA 3. University of South Florida